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ABSTRACT

In an effort to help students on academic suspension achieve full academic status and succeed in college, New York's Bronx Community College developed the New Start program, a portfolio-based intervention strategy utilizing personal success contracts. Students participating in the program complete guided self-assessments, identify problem areas, carry out contract assignments to solve their particular problems, collect and revise information, and prepare a formal written plan of action for moving ahead with college study in the form of a portfolio. First, participants assess their academic performance by completing a self-assessment. New starts uses five main areas of self-assessment: (1) Initial statement of barriers to success; (2) transcript grade analysis; (3) time management analysis; (4) review of study skills and study habits; and (5) reconsideration of academic majors and career goals. Once the self-assessment is complete, counselors intervene to assist students in utilizing and defining this initial criteria. Counselors serve as contract mediators by monitoring student progress, measuring the actual extent of problem behaviors, mediating strategies to change behaviors, and maintaining the change strategy. Contains 22 references. A sample self-assessment form for program participants is attached. (BCY)

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COUNSELOR-MEDIATED CONTRACTS IN SELF MANAGEMENT FOR STUDENTS IN THE NEW START PROGRAM

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NEW START PROGRAM

Fact Sheet

Eligibility

Students, whose academic records from BCC or other colleges of origin ordinarily would make them ineligible to pursue further study, may enter the NEW START program at BCC if they have previously earned no more than 60 college credits.

Colleges from CUNY, SUNY, and other private colleges who send their students to BCC to "improve" their grade point averages also qualify for the NEW START program.

Benefits of the Program

NEW START participants are admitted to Bronx Community College as matriculated students in good standing.

Up to 30 of a NEW START student's previously earned credits (including C grades) can be used toward an associate degree at BCC.

Grades of F and D from previous colleges or from previous semesters at BCC are NOT carried over into the BCC cumulative grade point average.

With an associate degree from BCC, a NEW START graduate is guaranteed admission to any CUNY senior college. (A student who wishes to return to his or her previous college may appeal for readmission there but should check with that college concerning its policies.)

Services Available

All participants in the NEW START program are assigned a counselor to assist them with academic, career, personal and transfer questions and concerns.

NEW START students whose admission applications are completed at least one month before the start of a semester are entitled to early registration for their first semester at Bronx Community College.

All of the College's tutorial, remedial, and support services are available to NEW START students.

College students who are on academic probation or are facing permanent suspension provide a special challenge. Their needs have crisis dimensions, and they typically demand dramatic and rapid turnarounds in their academic lives.

Given these demands, how can counselors effectively intervene with these students? A portfolio approach based on assessment and personal success contracts is proposed as an intervention strategy. The strategy is nested in student-centered, self-assessment of personal barriers to success, study skills, and career development planning (Bartlett & Knoblock, 1988; Rogers, 1984; Schmelzer & Brozo, 1982).

The portfolio approach is also founded on motivational concerns explained by Mealey (1990), who proposes that for at-risk university students, successful learning is a product of effort and perseverance, not a function of ability. The portfolio combines cognitive skills and affective components to motivate students to take control of their learning processes and become academic achievers.

The NEW START intervention strategy requires of students to complete guided self-assessments, identify problem areas, carry out "contract"assignments that aim at solving their particular problems, collect and revise information, and complete a formal written plan of action in the form of a portfolio for moving ahead with college study. This approach allows NEW START students to focus their resources on gaining full academic standing as soon as feasible.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

The first stage in any recovery program is assessment. NEW START will use five main areas of assessment with NEW START students: (a) initial statement of barriers to success, (b) transcript grade analysis, (c) time management analysis, (d) review of study skills and study habits, and (e) reconsideration of academic majors and career goals.

Barriers to success

NEW START students initiate self-assessment by explaining what they expect to gain from joining the program. The majority of these students are in trouble both personally and academically. Some have problems with time management, others with study skills, while some are disgruntled with their majors. Heavy class loads and work loads coupled with financial obligations are often a major drawback. They also complain of procrastination, lack of focus, and lack of rapport with their professors. They all want concrete solutions to their problems, although they do not have a clear concept of the underlying causes.

It is important that NEW START students begin to identify the barriers they face and assume ownership for their difficulties. This raises their levels of commitment and motivation to the task.

Transcript grade analysis

The first step in dealing with the high-risk status of NEW START students is examining transcript grades to determine the causes of low grade point averages (GPAs). NEW START students will review their transcripts for three analyses. First, they plot their GPAs from semester to semester to identify trends. Second, they do a frequency count of their grades (typically in the C-D-F range) to look at the sources of their marginal GPAs. Third, they compute the average number of credits for which they enroll each semester and compare this to the average number of credits they complete each semester. These students often enroll for 15-18 credits but complete only 6-9 credits per semester. NEW START students will speculate in writing on the sources of their low GPAs.

Time Management analysis

Low grades are generally the result of ineffectual study time. For time use analysis, NEW START program draw on the basic techniques given by McWhorter (1980, 1992). NEW START students are asked to reflect on their previous semester's time use.

After brainstorming and listing all possible time use tasks, NEW START students are helped to make up their own lists and total up an average weekly time expenditure. They are also guided to relate marginal or failing GPAs to their lack of proper time management. Often, weekly estimates deviate markedly above or below the available 168 hours. Students then realize that they do not have a true feeling for time allocation. They realize that they spend more time at a job, watching television, talking on the phone, or simply lazing around than they spend on studying. Study time typically averages 1 hour or less per week for each hour in class (in contrast to the recommended 2 hours of preparation per class).

Academic major and career goals analysis

A key factor in student motivation is the quality of commitment they have for their fields of study as well as the completion of a college degree. Career goals assessment is initiated by asking NEW START students to reflect on whether they are satisfied with their choice of academic majors or need professional reorientation. Some are uncertain, and a few voice strong feelings of dissatisfaction with their present career goals.

An important issue with those uncertain about their major is that they are uncommitted and uninspired. For some, this stems from a lack of adequate information. For others, the choice of major has been based on parental insistence, peer group pressure, or high school programming.

Through intense self-analysis, NEW START students clarify their career goals and record their follow-ups in the contracts that comprise their success portfolios.

Review of Study Skills.

It is important that NEW START students determine early the adequacy of their study skills. Assessment in these areas is consolidated since time is short. Three elements compose this guided self-assessment: (a) Reading skills, (b) note-taking skills, and (c) test-taking skills.

INTERVENTION

Once the assessment results are analyzed, intervention procedures are set in motion. These are: (a) refinement of personal barrier to success statement, (b) transcript restoration, (c) time management, (d) rethinking of academic major and career goals, (e) improving on study skills, and (f) setting future directions.

Refinement of personal barrier to success statement

In their first attempts at explaining the reasons for being in the NEW START program, the majority of students simply state that they are in academic jeopardy due to problems that are immediate and personal. Most avoid explaining, as they have not given serious thought to the nature or the magnitude of these problems. Over time, with repeated contacts with a counselor, students begin to recognize the true nature of their difficulties and dismiss their initial superficial explanations.

Often students have little or no idea how to improve their academic status. As their guided self-assessment evolves, they come to realize that marginal academic endeavors are nested in inadequate study skills and lack of time management.

NEW START students come to the college at a make or break point in their academic lives. They have decided to preserve their college standing, but they are unwilling to invest time and effort in learning. Weinsheimer (1993) believes this preservation motivation can be channeled into learning motivation.

Mealey (1990) explains that learning motivation can be enhanced through self-awareness and self-control. Students make this conversion by prodding themselves toward greater self-awareness and by taking control of their learning processes. This is initiated through problem refinement as they continuously return to the counselor to translate self-assessments into contracts for success.

One reason for lack of learning motivation is lack of adequate background knowledge which is instrumental to college success. It is important to talk about the students' academic backgrounds. Students are challenged to reflect on the content and quality of their high school education. Does it equip them with the needed skills to succeed at the college level? Does it provide the background knowledge necessary for their academic majors, or do they find themselves constantly working to make up for its absence?

Once students come to grips with the reality of their academic preparation, they become open to accepting responsibility for restoring their grades and for developing new approaches to learning. Counselors will help the students draft their insights into specific tasks outlined in success contracts.

Transcript restoration

The first logical step in confronting problems of NEW START students is to help them devise ways to restore their transcript grades and raise their GPAs. The counselor will intervene by introducing the students to the idea that a smaller course load with a higher GPA is a better option than a large load with a low GPA. NEW START students are then shown how to trim for smaller loads and to replan their time lines for graduation. Students will also estimate their overall GPA to obtain regular matriculation status by listing desired or probable grades in their current courses. Ultimately, NEW START students will be required to describe the organizational and study skills they will employ to shift their performance levels from C-D-F to A-B-C.

NEW START students will also be informed about course retake and grade appeals options open to them. Too frequently, students operate with little or with erroneous information about their rights and options in course retake and grade appeals. Students are directed to simply ask their professors to explain how their final grades are derived and whether their grades have been miscalculated If this is the case, professors are willing to submit grade changes and award a higher grade.

What is important here is that too many students passively accept evaluations of their course assignments and course grades without question and without productive feedback from their instructors. Students must take the initiative in planning for reconfiguring their course grades. We will encourage them to initiate regular interactions with their instructors, both in and out of classrooms.

Time management

To help students gain control of their time, we will intervene by helping them to establish new time plans in order to get desired grades. This will prove challenging for working students who carry large course loads so as to graduate as soon as possible. The goal is to reach some level of satisfaction in balancing time between work and study, as every issue concerning academic success is linked to the time factor. Writing, text reading, studying for tests, and working all hinge on sensible allocations of time.

To achieve this balance and to bring more precision to their approaches to planning, we show students how to correlate time information with transcript grade analysis and transcript restoration. We will ask them to target 2 hours of study, at a minimum, for each hour spent in class.

Students then draft the results of these efforts and add the time plans, which include both the old and new time analyses. We help them to explain how the new schedules differ from the old ones and how the new planning allows them to achieve their goals.

Rethinking academic majors and career goals

For those students seeking greater certainty in their academic majors and career goals, we intervene by reviewing their programs of study. Many students operate with inaccurate information about their program of study. They are often ignorant of degree requirements, course requirements, and the GPAs necessary to complete their degrees.

If students are seeking to change majors, we send them to the career specialist for reevaluation of career preferences. We also send them to the job placement office to get job demand data for their degrees. We help them to describe in writing the means by which they have achieved their specific career goal resolutions.

Improving study skills

We intervene by introducing students to inference-making strategies through completion of reading tasks (Thurstone, 1990). We also teach them various text reading strategies such as developing expectations, developing a sense of text structure through focused concept mapping, and retaining information through written summarization.

Students who need help with notetaking and testaking are coached with strategies from Pauk (1984).

COUNSELOR AS CONTRACT-MEDIATOR: GENERAL ROLES

Self-management is not a new idea by any means; it might even be traced back to the Socratic dictum, Know thyself More recently, the practice of self-management has fallen under such labels as self-control, self-discipline, self-regulation, and self-help. As it is currently used in the field of psychological education, self-management is operationally defined as the systematic application of principles of behavior modification to direct a change in one's own behavior (Goldstein et al, 1976). In the context of self-management, these principles are systematically incorporated into four sequential and interdependent components that are referred to here as the general roles of contract mediators in the NEW START program. These general roles in counselor-mediated self-management are (a) monitoring, (b) measurement, (c) mediation, and (d) maintenance.

Monitoring

Monitoring consists of a process whereby the counselor helps the NEW START student to purposefully and objectively observe patterns of thinking and feeling and behaving within the context of the situations that occur and the consequences that follow them (Bolstad & Johnson, 1982).

The goals of monitoring is to determine how, when, and where students exhibit certain thoughts, feelings, and behaviors and whether the results or consequences of their actions are as they would like them to be. It is a systematic process of observing behavior to increase self-awareness or self-understanding.

Thus, a student might be helped by the contract mediator to systematically analyze his/her study regimen and to determine which actual "study" behaviors are deficient and which "nonstudy" behaviors are excessively distracting.

Measurement

The second general role of the contract mediator consists of the process of assessing together with the NEW START student the actual extent of a problem behavior. Measurement represents the objective or precision element in self-awareness. Once the problem behavior has been identified through monitoring, it becomes imperative that the contract mediator and NEW START student validate the degree to which this problem exists (Cautela, 1979).

Validation can only come about through objective and reliable measurement. Such measurement is necessary in both determining whether the problem behavior really warrants change or mediation and whether subsequent mediation of the behavior has actually altered the behavior in a desired direction.

Depending on the nature of the behavior under study, measurement may take either one of two forms: counting or timing. Such behavior as watching television lends itself more to temporal measurement. For a discrete behavior such as completing a math problem, a frequency count is easily obtained by maintaining a log.

Thus, the contract mediator could help the NEW START student get an accurate, objective measure of the extent of television viewing. To insure a reliable assessment, the student would be asked to keep a log of television viewing hours for a period of one week. At the end of this week period, this objective information will reveal the extent of television viewing and may indicate that change is really necessary so that some hours can be set aside for study.

Mediation

Mediation involves the development and implementation of a strategy or strategies to change the self-selected behavior in a desired direction. Behavioral change strategies are as varied as the behaviors the NEW START student wishes to mediate and the situations in which these behaviors occur. In all instances, however, change strategies represent the systematic, purposeful application of the principles of behavior modification (Brown & Brown, 1982; Cautela, 1979).

Behavior is a function of the environmental conditions under which it occurs, and that, to a large extent, the consequences of behavior determine the degree to which a person will behave that way again (Bandura, 1969; Watson & Tharp, 1972).

Applying the principle of situational control, the contract mediator might point out to the NEW START student that he/she will get considerably more out of that reading assignment if he/she turns off the television or read in another room where distractions are kept at a minimum. Applying the reward principle, the contract mediator could suggest a contingency relationship: the favorite television sit-com after an hour of concentrated reading.

Maintenance

The fourth general role of the contract mediator represents a compilation of the other three management procedures. Maintenance involves the continuous monitoring and measuring of the effects of the mediation regimen. To insure successful attainment of the behavioral goal, the contract mediator must show the NEW START student that systematic adjustments in the change strategies must take place. These change strategies are based on changes in relevant environmental conditions as well as the distinct changes occurring in the problem behavior (Zifferblatt, 1980).

By continuing to monitor his/her study habits, the NEW START student might see that he/she has attained the initial goal (getting B's in quizzes); this is only the first step, however, toward the terminal goal of obtaining a cumulative GPA of 2.00. To continue moving in the desired direction, the NEW START student must be ready to modify behavior once again (get tutoring in Math) and move to the next plan or intermediate steps to acquiring a 2.00 cumulative GPA for the semester.

COUNSELOR AS CONTRACT-MEDIATOR: SPECIFIC ROLES

Reviewed below are seven specific criteria for judging effective planning of the counselor=mediated contract in self management. Each criterion is discussed as a specific role and placed in the context of counselor-mediated contract negotiation with the NEW START student.

Mutual Agreement on Goals is Vital

The effective contract mediator avoids imposing goals on the NEW START student. An imposed goal, one originating in the mind of the counselor, is inappropriate because it excludes the NEW START student from the decision-making process and places responsibility for change in the counselor thus encouraging greater dependence rather than independence (Vriend & Dyer, 1984).

That is not to say that the counselor does not assume responsibility for fostering goal-oriented thinking. Most students will come with low-level goal-setting and goal-achieving skills, particularly in the areas most

troublesome to them. Thus, the counselor introduces goal-oriented thinking indirectly by such questions: "Have you considered any possible alternatives to your current way of acting and reacting in class? Can you act differently in the presence of the class instructor? Would you have been late, if you were not used to staying up late watching TV?"

Such urgings are helpful in stimulating a student about ways of being different. Contract mediators should avoid the temptation of doing all of the work of goal-setting for their students--which contract mediators may be inclined to do sometimes out of impatience, wanting to speed up the helping sessions, sometimes out of a misguided notion that they know better than the students which goals ought to be set. The effective contract mediators are aware of the fact that most people resist being told what to do. They know that an imposed goal constitutes a kind of command, a case of taking over. The message thus becomes: "I am the important person here, not you. I will do your thinking for you and when you accomplish the new behavior, you will be grateful to me and thankful that you found me in the first place." Contract mediators will soon find themselves ordering or begging students: "Will you do this for me?" "Will you try...etc."

Contract mediators do not have the "answer" or "solution" in their own heads. Sometimes contract mediators desperately may want to give it away knowing that subsequent circumstances in the students' lives would be wonderful if only students would follow their solutions. But this is an unsophisticated way of thinking, certainly not stemming from any understanding of how people change. Students hear these "answers." They sound good at the time. But later, on some level of consciousness, they remind themselves otherwise: "Me? I'm different. That might work for him or someone else but it just wouldn't work for me."

While students may agree to work on them, the chances for such goals being met in real life are seriously minimized. So the contract mediator respects the fact that the goals must be mutually determined, and most desirably, elicited from the NEW START student.

Goal Specificity Promotes Goal Achievement

Goals may be broad or narrow, immediate, intermediate, or long-range. The time factor implied in the concept of a broad, long-range goal can be productively invoked to give the helping relationship some directionality, if the contract includes many sessions. Beyond this, global, long-range goals offer little. Such global goals as the following are futile without specifying steps for their attainment: "I'm going to find myself." "I'm going to succeed." "I'm getting out of probation." "I intend to eliminate all my bad study habits." These and millions like them tend to be useless for they lack specificity. One has no way of knowing if, when, how or why one has "found himself/herself." Rather than being realistic action plans, such goals are mere vague descriptions of the student's desires.

The tendency to set global goals occurs frequently simply because they are easier to name. Getting down to details is harder work than settling

for generalities. If successful contract goal-negotiation is to be assured, the goal-setting process becomes a chain, each link a definable piece of new student behavior sequentially added to that which has already been mastered. Small, highly focused goals can be carried out in a direct fashion.

Goals, precursors to change and growth, are difficult to pin down. Goals answer four vital questions: (1) Who? (2) Will do What? (3) to What Extent? (4) Under What Conditions? To this we would add a fifth questions: When? Pinning down the time is crucial (Gottman & Lieblum, 1990).

On-Target Goals Are Relevant to the Self-Defeating Behavior of the NEW START student

Focus on behaviors that prevent a student's becoming a more in-charge person. Goals aimed at the elimination of self-defeating behaviors have the greatest importance to the NEW START student (Vriend & Dyer, 1983).

A goal that has no practical application to the student will become an exercise in futility or frustration. Often students will want to try out all kinds of new behaviors that are unrelated to behaviors that characterize their living. Such can be interpreted as resistance to the always difficult and risky work involved in bringing about self-change. Similarly, student will choose to do some verbal wandering and look for easy alternatives, naming essentially irrelevant possibilities or ones in which they have already demonstrated acceptable expertise. The contract mediator watches for relevance in the goal-setting process and helps the NEW START student to zero in on self-defeating thinking and behavior. The contract mediator does not encourage or endorse banal or trite goals that reinforce student avoidance.

Effectively Set Goals Are Achievable and Success-Oriented

Often a student does not achieve a goal that has been mutually agreed upon during contract negotiation. Then, rather than thinking the student has failed, the contract mediator knows he/she has been remiss, a party to ineffective goal setting.

The contract mediator must see to it that the goals being set are realistically attainable. Many students will agree to attempt virtually impossible goals for themselves simply to please the counselor or because they have a misreading of their current abilities exaggerated in the contract negotiation by excitement over the possibilities of being different.

The dice ought to be loaded in favor of success. The individual who tries and does not succeed is likely to think, "I knew I could'nt be different, and now I've proven it." "I've blown it, the way I always do. I guess I'm just destined to stay the way I am." Such internalized statements reinforce the "failure identity" (Glasser, 1965) that the student had when placed on academic probation or suspension.

Effectively Set Goals are Quantifiable and Measurable

The contract mediator must understand the folly in having students attempt to accomplish something that cannot be measured. If the student cannot later say, "There, I did it and I know it is done," the sought-after goal lacked measurability. Thus, the aim "to find out more about colleges" is unmeasurable because it is imprecise. But a goal that includes talking to three admissions officers from three named colleges before next Friday and reading up on the profiles of five additional colleges in a particular book in a particular library is quantifiable and measurable.

Just as students need to know when they have accomplished a goal, they and the contract mediator need to know how frequently and intensely certain behaviors occur. Once an accurate picture of the status quo emerges, goals for change can be made more realistic and results can be compared with baseline data.

The feeling of accomplishment that accompanies goal achievement is vital for the students. If the students do not know and feel that they are making gains, the drive to persist in the unnatural business of behaving differently, of continuing their difficult efforts, loses credibility. Thus, goals that include the why, when, how, with whom, and numbers of times lead to successful new behavior acquisition, while fuzzy nonmeasuable goals lead to a student's being in the dark about his/her own progress.

Effectively Set Goals Are Behavioral and Observable

Student goals that are not stated in terms that are translatable to action are weaker than those that can be. This is to say that the most effectively set goals result in behavior that can be witnessed. This criterion is similar to the measurability component, but it differs in that the stress is on looking at the behaviors, not counting them (Vriend & Dyer, 1983). Thus, a goal that enjoins a student to simply "think" about something lacks external confirmation, but one that includes writing down thoughts, speaking them into a tape recorder, or discussing them with a particular friend adds a behavioral dimension that is observable

Goals manifested in behavior that enables witnesses to register and confirm them are crucial, even when the student is the only witness of self-generated behavior. The witness aspect allows the student to monitor and evaluate aspirational progress with the assistance of the contract mediator as the outside-of-self referent. The contract mediator provides this for in-session behavior, but does not live in the student's life space outside the session where it really counts. When behavioral references for goals are unclear, the very purpose of counselor-mediated contracts becomes obscured. Contract mediators know that actors have difficulty simultaneously acting and seeing their actions. Thus, contract mediators help students to set goals that can be mirrored by others.

Goals Have Been Effectively Structured When a Student Understands Them and Can Restate Them Clearly

A common error in goal setting is assuming that the student understands them. This pertains to most action-oriented aspects of the helping process: contract mediators may fail to take the time required for a student to state what was helpful or even what transpired (Vriend & Dyer, 1983). For effective goal setting, student restatement is crucial.

Contract mediators might labor under the assumption that stated goals have been well-understood, and are surprised in later sessions when students indicate they have not even attempted the goals because they could not clearly identify what they had committed themselves to do. Student agreement on a goal is not enough. Unless a student can repeat back precisely what it is that will be done during the between-sessions period in the measurable and observable terms stressed above and why such action is personally productive, the goal-setting process is incomplete. After student restatement, distortions and misperceptions can be eliminated and goals can be assessed according to the six preceding criteria. Behavior modification can then occur. The session ends with both student and contract mediator in knowledgeable agreement about the details of the contract or psychological homework.

LOOKING AHEAD

The personal responsibility factor represents the most salient and productive characteristic of this self-management model, while at the same time it underlies its greatest limitation. As with all helping endeavors, contracts in self-management serve as tools. With adequate motivation, and when applied both purposefully and systematically, the student can use this tool to modify behavior in whatever direction desired. Whether this tool is applied by the student himself/herself or implemented by a mediator, the prerequisite remains the same: the motivation for change must exist. The self-management regimen necessitates that the student possess the rationality and perceptiveness to monitor her/his behavior, to measure that behavior, and creatively devise and maintain strategies that will change that behavior.

Behavior under self-management must be of "real" concern, it must be operationally defined, feedback must be maintained, and sufficient time must be given for new learning to occur. Self-management is neither a panacea nor an expedient toward problem-free living; it does, however, represent a treatment mode that the student can use at various times in life.

The systematic acquisition of self-management skills significantly increases the probability that when the student experiences the inevitable difficulties of growth and change, he/she can be actively engaged in both diagnosis of the problem and the remediation process. In many cases, the student may use his/her maintenance skills to anticipate future problems and take substantive action to minimize their occurrence.

Students trained in self-management skills can more readily carry out preventative or remedial actions without the extensive involvement of professional educators and counselors thus maximizing the opportunity for instructors to pursue educational priorities and counselors to channel their energies into the counseling, consulting, and coordinating functions that warrant their full involvement.

Self-management should become an integral part in the repertoire of acquired skills of students long after their involvement in the NEW START program. With the tools of self-management, students can actively pursue contracts and goals for which they aspire. When applied in a systematic way and consistent manner, self-management offers the high-risk student an efficient and effective opportunity to be his/her own counselor!

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APPENDIX A

Dear Student:

This letter acknowledges your request to be considered for admission into the NEW START program at Bronx Community College.

After reviewing your academic record, I am admitting you on for the semester for a maximum of twelve credits. In accordance with College Policy, you must attain a "C" (2.00) average each term or meet the necessary tabular requirements to be removed from probation. If you maintain this level of achievement, you will be permitted to continue your education at Bronx Community College and you will be able to register for more than twelve credits.

It is my hope that you fully appreciate the seriousness of your current academic standing. Failure to maintain this level of academic performance will jeopardize any future enrollment at the College. In your first semester in the program, you will need to meet with a counselor for a series of scheduled sessions to negotiate personal contracts for success.

I sincerely hope you will be successful in your future academic endeavors at BCC. If I can be of any further assistance to you, please feel free to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Director, NEW START Program

COUNSELOR-MEDIATED CONTRACTS IN SELF MANAGEMENT FOR STUDENTS IN THE NEW START PROGRAM

S e l f - A s s e s s m e n t

DR. EMILIO D. SANTA RITA, Jr.

BRONX COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Of The City University of New York
Department of Student Development
1997

PERSONAL EVALUATION

It is often helpful to sort out strengths and liabilities related to your academic success. This will give you a better idea of what is working against you and what you have going for you as you try to do better in college. Be as honest with yourself as you can.

Read each item below and circle your response. Circle "?" if unsure.

Personal Factors

Do you have clear goals that you are working toward?	Yes	No	?
Are you motivated to be in college?	Yes	No	?
Do you generally act in a responsible manner?	Yes	No	?
Do you have enough money to cover your expenses?	Yes	No	?
Are you in good physical health?	Yes	No	?
Are you free from any destructive habits or addictions?	Yes	No	?
Are you disciplined in the way you approach your studies?	Yes	No	?
Do you have dependable means of transportation?	Yes	No	?
Do you generally make wise decisions?	Yes	No	?
Do you feel positive about your future?	Yes	No	?
Do you generally feel calm and stable?	Yes	No	?

Social Factors

Are your family and friends supportive?	Yes	No	?
Can you meet all your responsibilities without difficulty?	Yes	No	?
If you work, does it leave you enough energy for school?	Yes	No	?
Do you have a stable relationship with someone special?	Yes	No	?
Can you stand up against peer pressure when necessary?	Yes	No	?
Do you enjoy socializing without it interfering with school?	Yes	No	?

PERSONAL EVALUATION (Continued)

It is often helpful to sort out strengths and liabilities related to your academic success. This will give you a better idea of what is working against you and what you have going for you as you try to do better in college. Be as honest with yourself as you can.

Read each item below and circle your response. Circle "?" if unsure.

Social Factors (Continued)

Is your social life rewarding and satisfying?	Yes	No	?
Are you generally able to get along with other students?	Yes	No	?
Do you relate well to your instructors?	Yes	No	?

If you answered "No" or "?" to one or more of the questions above, you should think about how these factor(s) may be affecting your academic progress. You must work with your counselor and plan to accomplish success contracts found in the booklet entitled - RETENTION CHECKLIST - Pathway I: Self-knowledge and Interpersonal Skills - Goals A to F: pp. 1 - 12.

ACADEMIC CHECKUP

There are many different factors that influence academic progress. The purpose of this section is to help you figure out which factors are most important to you.

Read each item below and circle your response. Circle "?" if unsure.

Academic Skills

Do you have difficulty keeping up with reading assignments?	Yes	No	?
Would you be more successful if you had stronger writing skills?	Yes	No	?
Could you use some assistance with your mathematical skills?	Yes	No	?

If you answered "Yes" to any of the questions above, you must work with your counselor and plan to accomplish success contracts found in the booklet entitled - RETENTION CHECKLIST - Pathway II: Bonding with Bronx Community College - Goals B & E: pp. 18 - 19; 24-25.

Time Management

Are you overwhelmed with too many commitments?	Yes	No	?
Does it seem like you never have enough time to do what needs to be done?	Yes	No	?
Do you generally wait until the last minute to get things done?	Yes	No	?

If you answered "Yes" to any of the questions above, you must work with your counselor and plan to accomplish success contracts found in the booklet entitled - RETENTION CHECKLIST - Pathway III: Study Habits and Study Skills - Goal B: pp. 29 - 30.

Memory

Do you have trouble memorizing facts for exams?	Yes	No	?
Do you often forget things that you want to remember?	Yes	No	?
Do you wish you knew some more effective memory techniques?	Yes	No	?

If you answered "Yes" to any of the questions above, you must work with your counselor and plan to accomplish success contracts found in the booklet entitled - RETENTION CHECKLIST - Pathway III: Study Habits and Study Skills - Goal F: pp. 37 - 38.

ACADEMIC CHECKUP (Continued)

Read each item below and circle your response. Circle "?" if unsure.

Note-Taking

Do you have trouble understanding notes made in class?	Yes	No	?
Do you have trouble knowing how much detail to write down in your notes?	Yes	No	?
Do your notes often leave out important points that you need to know?	Yes	No	?

If you answered "Yes" to any of the questions above, you must work with your counselor and plan to accomplish success contracts found in the booklet entitled - RETENTION CHECKLIST - Pathway III: Study Habits and Study Skills - Goal H: pp. 42 - 45.

Test-Taking

Do you tend to panic during a test?	Yes	No	?
Do you feel like testing doesn't reflect what you know?	Yes	No	?
Are you often unpleasantly surprised by what is on a test?	Yes	No	?

If you answered "Yes" to any of the questions above, you must work with your counselor and plan to accomplish success contracts found in the booklet entitled - RETENTION CHECKLIST - Pathway III: Study Habits and Study Skills - Goals I & J: pp. 46 - 50.

VOCATIONAL & CAREER GOALS

Read each item below and circle your response. Circle "?" if unsure.

Are you undecided about a major and/or a career?	Yes	No	?
Do you often lack the motivation to study?	Yes	No	?
Do you wish your life had more meaning and a clearer purpose?	Yes	No	?

If you answered "Yes" to any of the questions above, you must work with your counselor and plan to accomplish success contracts found in the booklet entitled - RETENTION CHECKLIST - Pathway IV: Career Planing - Goals A to G: pp. 52 - 63.

By now you should have an idea of some things to do that may increase your chances of success in college. A contract is the beginning place; how you carry out this contract is what will determine your success.

The Counselors are ready to help you achieve your educational goals. Please take advantage of their interest in your future and of the many College resources available for your use. We hope that this SELF-ASSESSMENT Booklet and the RETENTION CHECKLIST Booklet will be of value in considering what you must do to achieve your goals.